

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dr. Robert Redfield, M.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Secretary Azar, Administrator Verma, Director Redfield, and Administrator Gaynor,

I am writing to request set-aside funding for nursing home and other senior care providers in the next tranche of Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Provider Relief Funds as well as an across the board strategy to protect the health of residents. I appreciate the HHS' work to provide funding to health care providers to support the fight against COVID-19 and the recognition that future funding targeted to the needs of long-term care facilities will be necessary to protect the residents they serve. Additionally, it is critical that there is a strategy to protect the health of long-term care facility residents, including through availability of testing and personal protective equipment.

Reports show that there have been at least 529 COVID-19-related deaths in nursing home or senior care centers in Colorado, which represents over 50% of the state of Colorado's COVID-19 fatalities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Americans 65 years and older, particularly those that live in a nursing home or other long-term care facility, are at higher risk for severe COVID-19-related outcomes. At this time, nursing home and other long-term care facilities report facing significantly higher costs for personal protective equipment and labor costs because of COVID-19. It is important we support the health of long-term care facility residents and staff by providing targeted support and a comprehensive strategy to address their unique safety considerations.

Between the CARES Act and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, Congress has provided \$175 billion in relief funds for health care providers to be distributed by HHS. I appreciate HHS' recognition that previous tranches of funding have not adequately addressed the needs of nursing home and senior care providers and your commitment to working on support in future tranches.

Additionally, to protect the health and safety of Americans in long-term care facilities, I request that all relevant federal agencies coordinate with states, local communities, and public health experts to evaluate current practices and develop an effective risk containment plan that takes into account both the current outbreak and potential, future waves of COVID-19.

I look forward to working together on more ways to support the health of long-term care facility residents and appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cory Gardner", with a stylized, flowing script.

Cory Gardner
United States Senator